



# BHS A.S.S.I.S.T. Spotlight

February 2023

Your EAP is a free and confidential service, which provides assessment and short-term counseling for a variety of mental health, substance abuse and work/life related issues. To learn more about your available benefits, contact your BHS Care Coordinator at 800.245.1150.



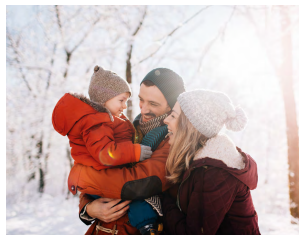
The Importance of Making  
Time for Yourself

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## The Importance of Making Time for Yourself

Making time for yourself by practicing self-care means taking the time to do things that help you live well and improve both your physical health and mental health. When it comes to your mental health, self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness and increase your energy. Even small acts of self-care in your daily life can have a big impact.

### Here are some tips to help you get started with self-care:

- Take a long shower or bath.
- Start a personal journal. Write down your thoughts and feelings.
- Practice deep breathing, meditation or other relaxation techniques. For meditation, you might just sit quietly and focus on your breath.
- Try dancing to your favorite tune.
- Go for a walk in nature or someplace pretty. Or try a different type of exercise that you enjoy.
- Watch the clouds on your lunch break.
- Express yourself through art, singing or some other creative hobby.
- Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.

- Read a book or magazine you enjoy.
- Make an effort to watch the sunset or sunrise.
- Listen to some soothing music.
- Make sleep a priority. Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep.
- Practice gratitude. Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for.
- Watch a comedian online or in-person.
- Focus on positivity. Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.

Self-care looks different for everyone, and it is important to find what you need and enjoy. It may take trial and error to discover what works best for you. Although self-care is not a cure for mental illnesses, understanding what causes or triggers your mild symptoms and what coping techniques work for you can help manage your mental health.

**If you would like more information on practicing self-care, call your designated BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150 or visit the website at [www.behavioralhealthsystems.com](http://www.behavioralhealthsystems.com). EAP through BHS provides free and confidential and counseling services.**



## Benefits of Using a Financial Planner

Most reputable financial planners are nonprofit and offer services at local offices, online or over the phone. If possible, find an organization that offers in-person counseling. Your financial institution, local consumer protection agency, friends and family may also be good sources of information and referrals.

Reputable financial planning organizations can advise you on managing money and debts, help develop a budget, offer free educational materials and provide workshops. Their counselors are certified and trained in consumer credit, debt management and budgeting. They discuss your entire financial situation and help develop a personalized plan to take charge of your finances.

### Ask the following questions to help find the best financial planner for you:

- **What services do you offer?** Look for an organization that offers a range of services, including budget counseling as well as savings and debt management classes. Avoid organizations that push a debt management plan (DMP) as your only option before they spend a significant amount of time analyzing your financial situation.

- **Are educational materials available for free?** Avoid organizations that charge for information.
- **What does future help look like?** In addition to helping me solve my immediate problem, will you help me develop a plan for avoiding problems in the future?
- **Are there setup and/or monthly fees?** Get a specific price quote in writing.
- **Will I have a formal written agreement or contract with you?** Don't sign anything without reading it first. Make sure all verbal promises are in writing.
- **What are the qualifications of your financial planners?** Are they accredited or certified by an outside organization? If so, by whom? Try to use an organization whose counselors are trained by a non-affiliated party.

Using a financial planner can help you see your options and get on a path of financial freedom. They can also help you prepare and plan for possible future pitfalls so you and your family can continue to meet your financial goals.

**If you would like additional guidance, call BHS at 800-245-1150 to talk to your Care Coordinator about scheduling a free and confidential appointment with a financial professional.**





## Simple Ways to Practice Daily Gratitude

Gratitude is a positive emotion that occurs when you understand and acknowledge that the positive experiences you have in life, small or large, are not owed to you but are gifts. It is the opposite of taking things for granted. The experience of this emotion on a regular basis has been shown to have very positive effects on enthusiasm, energy and wellbeing. Because of the positive benefits of gratitude on health and happiness, it is important to regularly practice gratitude to increase your resilience.

Research has shown that the positive effects of gratitude are multiplied as you increase: the strength of your feeling of gratitude, how often you experience gratitude at any given time, how many life circumstances you feel grateful for and the number of people in your life to whom you feel grateful.

There are a number of exercises that can increase your sense of gratitude in each of these areas. They take just a few minutes a day and can have a life-changing effect.

- **Begin each day with a two-minute gratitude session.** Find a quiet space for two minutes and bring to mind the things and people in your life you are grateful for.
- **Use a daily gratitude journal.** The key to doing this is to never repeat an entry. You will find that this helps you to begin to pay attention to many of the small gifts that come into your life.
- **Discuss Gratitude.** If you have children in your life, make it a practice to discuss gratitude on a daily basis. Doing this is a wonderful teaching tool as you help your children to develop resilience.

### RECIPE: Quick Gumbo • 6 Servings • 30 Minutes Cook Time

**Ingredients** • 1 package of smoked sausage, sliced • 1 can diced tomatoes with green peppers and onions • 15 oz. chicken broth • 1/2 cup water • 1 cup uncooked instant rice • 1 Tbsp Old Bay • 1 can whole kernel corn, drained

**Instructions** • In a large saucepan cook sausage until browned • Stir in tomatoes, broth, water and Old Bay • Bring to a boil • Mix in rice and corn • Cook for 2 minutes • Cover and remove from heat for 10 minutes • Serve with sliced green onions if desired

